Dewan's reply.—I must thank Mr. Karayalar for the comprehensive survey he has made of the work of the Salt department and for the various suggestions he has offered. All these suggestions will receive the consideration of Government. No department is stationary. Every department must be moving in order to be progressive and suggestions will always be thankfully received. A gentleman that makes a special study of one department is often apt to ignore the interests of other departments and forget that in giving a final decision Government will have to consider a number of interests. Mr. Karayalar has criticised the Chief Engineer's proposals in regard to the discharge of flood waters. The Chief Engineer is an expert officer, and his opinion cannot be lightly brushed aside. He has also made certain sweeping recommendations such as the prohibition of wet cultivation within a half mile belt from the salt factory. What that prohibition would mean by way of loss to Government and the ryots will have to be considered. I mention these things just to show that the interests of one department cannot alone be considered.

(4) Excise & Customs.

23. Necessity for introducing the sweet toddy system.

Mr. Avira Mathai (Member, Muvattupuzha Taluk) said that before the introduction of foreign sugar, it was the sago palm jaggery they were using in large quantities in the north and that on account of the present high cost of sugar there was considerable demand for jaggery, but the supply was getting very scanty, mainly owing to the rules prohibiting the making of sweety toddy without a license except in the taluks of the Padmanabhapuram Division and in Neyyattinkara and Shencottah. Though the license was free, the number of persons allowed to enjoy the privilege of tapping for sweet toddy was very small, and even that number was decreasing every year with the result that the jaggery industry was fast dying out. In the taluks of Muvattupuzha, Todupuzha and Minachil it was not common to tap the cocoanut and palmyra trees as there were many sago palms. The fear of Government that sweet toddy would be fermented and converted into toddy was baseless as the people used fermented toddy directly much more than sweet toddy indirectly. Further, there was the preventive staff of the Excise department for the detection and bringing to book of cases of unlawful distillation or consumption. In the Southern Division, the palmyra trees were useful to the people in many ways and they were free to make jaggery and fermented toddy, but the sago palm was useless, if it was not tapped for toddy, whether sweet or fermented, and on account of the prohibitive rate of tree-tax, only a limited number of these trees were used for tapping. The Member was of opinion that if jaggery making was made as attractive and profitable in the northern taluks as it was in the southern taluks, illicit distillation would altogether vanish, and that since sugar could be made out of sweet toddy and jaggery, it would go a great way to the economic and industrial development of the country. The Member therefore prayed that the restrictions against the manufacture of sweet toddy be removed and the conditions be made the same both in the northern and southern taluks of the State.

Dewan's reply.—The matter will be examined.

24. Trade and certain suggestions for improving it.

Mr. K. M. Sivathanu Chettiyar (Member, Trading Classes, Kottar) observed with gratification that the State was progressing in every respect. But people generally forgot that progressive administration meant increased expenditure and, with the instances before them of the recent increase of process fees, value of copying paper and Anchal charges consequent on the reorganisation of the Judicial and Anchal departments, they feared that the Government proposed to impose additional taxation to meet the additional expenditure that had to be incurred to carry out the various reforms that were necessary to bring the State in line with the other progressive administrations of the world. The Member admitted the necessity for the reforms and would therefore suggest means for developing the revenue without taxing the people who were already in poor circumstances. In his opinion, the encouragement of the cultivation of tobacco in the State would be one way of increasing the revenue and at the same time improving the economic condition of the people. Tobacco to the

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value of Rs. 30 to 40 lakhs was being consumed in the State every year and the Government also derived a revenue of about Rs. 16 lakhs. But the merchants were put to considerable difficulties in the matter of importing the article. If the cultivation of tabacco were allowed in the State, nearly Rs. 20 lakhs that went outside would remain in the State itself and benefit the State, the merchant and the cultivator. It would also be a means of livelihood to thousands of poor people. The cultivation of tobacco was going on on a large scale in the Madura District and in several parts of the Tinnevelly District and had been extended up to half a mile from the Aramboly frontier. The subject was brought forward at the eleventh session of the Assembly but, to their great disappointment, it was ordered to lie over. It would be a very profitable concern, if the people of South Travancore were allowed to cultivate tobacco. The Member, therefore, requested that the present representation at least be favourably considered by Government. He then referred to the difficulties experienced by the merchants of South Travancore owing to Jaffna tobacco not being stocked in the Kottar bankshall and their having to get their supplies from Quilon and Alleppey, and prayed for early orders to store the requisite quantity in the Kottar bankshall. The Member also referred to the necessity for the early extension of the Railway to South Travancore.

Dewan's reply.—The suggestions will be considered.

25. Suggestions for the development of commerce.

Mr. M. L. Janardhanan Pillai (Member, Trading Classes, Alleppey) began by saying that the export and import trade of the country had not yet been established by the sons of the soil on any sound and satisfactory basis. In the first place, the people had no commercial education and did not know where and to whom they should look up to for sound and safe guidance. There was no officer in the State service with up-to-date knowledge and experience to help the trading classes with advice and there was no non-official body either for the purpose. It was a mistake to suppose that any one could handle the difficult problems connected with trade. Even those actually in the line and having considerable experience felt that they were every day face to face with fresh difficulties in tackling business questions. It was, however, a matter for gratification that the Government had already proposed to take up the question of commercial education and had felt the necessity for men trained in such subjects as Book-keeping, Accountancy and Commerical Correspondence. The Member urged the early entertainment of the proposed Commercial School and suggested that it should be started at Alleppey, the chief commercial centre of the State. He also explained the lines on which such a school should be worked and said that it should, besides training men as book-keepers, clerks and accountants, also aim at helping the formation of a class of men with a wide outlook on commercial subjects. The Member next spoke about the absence of an agency for furnishing correct information to the local merchants about the conditions of trade, and the rates prevailing in the various markets of the world, the want of accurate knowledge of which was a serious impediment to the development of trade. Another serious difficulty which the Travancore merchants laboured under was the want of shipping facilities at Alleppey, which led to a diversion of the bulk of the trade to the Cochin port. With the development of the Cochin harbour, Alleppey would suffer still more unless prompt arrangements were made to improve the existing conditions of the port. Steamers fought shy of the Alleppey port for want of necessary facilities. The required number of boats were not available for the transhipment of cargo from the steamers. The slowness in transport by ordinary boats and the absence of a safe anchorage for boats to take shelter under during bad weather were other serious drawbacks to the development of shipping. The Member also represented that the Travancore merchants should obtain the same sort of treatment and facilities from the steam-ship companies as the European firms. He next urged the formation of a Commercial Intelligence department, on up-to-date lines under an Indian Officer of sound commercial experience assisted by a Committee of officials and non-officials who should be in a position to offer advice on correct data, especially in the matter of international trade development. Lastly, the Member referred to the announcement made in the opening Address in regard to the deputation of an officer to study the working of the

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